BACKGROUNDER

Technology Cooperation: Sustaining Economic Growth and Environmental Improvement

For over two decades, U.S. industry has been a world leader in developing energy technologies and implementing environmental policies. Every year, American industry spends more than $100 billion to protect the environment, and many companies have environmental technology programs overseas. By providing cleaner, more energy-efficient technologies and know-how to developing countries, U.S. industry can simultaneously build on its existing accomplishments and help reduce global emissions of greenhouse gases. Technology innovation and cooperation, guided by the marketplace–not government mandates–is the key to addressing the dual challenges of sustaining economic growth and environmental improvement. U.S. business has the opportunity and the know-how to meet this challenge.

Purpose of Technology Cooperation

Technology cooperation is aimed at helping developing countries expand their economies and improve their quality of life, while at the same time improving their environmental performance. Emissions of greenhouse gases are reduced, in addition to limiting emissions of pollutants such as NO_X and SO_2. Technology cooperation includes efforts that combine technology and equipment with "soft" technology – training, management assistance and software. A major product of the private sector's vast operational experience, soft technology could be one of our country's greatest contributions to developing countries and those with economies in transition.

Importance of Technology Cooperation

Technology cooperation is an important component of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, which states, "The developed countries...shall take all practicable steps to promote, facilitate, and finance, as appropriate, the transfer or access to environmentally sound technologies and know-how to other parties, particularly developing countries...."